

NATIONAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN AN ASYMMETRIC WORLD

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USAWC CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

NATIONAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN AN ASYMMETRIC WORLD

by

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ABSTRACT

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The last nine years of persistent conflict in the Middle East and South Asia has demonstrated the need to look at the global environment through a different lens. What was a bi-polar world before the fall of the Berlin War, with a focus on conventional threats and operations, is now an asymmetrical world shaped by a confluence of crime, migration, and extremism, where irregular war and non-state actors greatly influence and threaten U.S. National Security. By identifying the major trends that are working against a stable world order, based on a Westphalian construct and coupled with a further understanding of Clausewitz's trinity, the U.S. Government can dictate national policies and implementation plans that provide a whole of government approach to solving problems, vice a scatter shot of programs and policies from each USG department and agency. Through this analysis, I will examine the asymmetric environment; the competition for influence of the relevant population; the effects and influence of mass movements; the case for irregular forces (not just military), if irregular warfare is the "new normal"; and recommendations on redesigning the USG implementation arm of foreign policy.

NATIONAL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN AN ASYMMETRIC WORLD

“The National Security Strategy, released May 27, 2010, lays out a strategic approach for advancing American interests, including the security of the American people, a growing U.S. economy, support for our values, and an international order that can address 21st century challenges.”ⁱ

The White House

The international world order has shifted -- so must US foreign policy, which is still designed around a cold war nation-state framework that provides inadequate guidance in a world that moves much faster than it did only 20 years ago. The world is complex -- a mix of actors across the spectrum from nuclear states to failed and failing states, from non-state actors that can influence entire regions and populations to transnational criminal organizations. And there is a continuous global competition for influence that pits our ability to protect U.S. National interests and to promote freedom and democracy against those that oppose personal freedoms and the western way of life. In order to meet those challenges, the federal government must transition to a more adaptable, efficient, and flexible foreign policy planning process that receives the maximum result from the allocation of scarce resources. The 9-11 commission recommended “unifying the many participants in the counterterrorism effort and their knowledge in a network-based information-sharing system that transcends traditional government boundaries,”ⁱⁱ while Secretary Gates indicated “America’s interagency toolkit is a hodgepodge of jerry-rigged arrangements constrained by a dated and complex patchwork of authorities, persistent shortfalls in resources, and unwieldy processes. Consider that the National Security Act that created most of the current interagency structure was passed in 1947.”ⁱⁱⁱ

In an asymmetric world, what is the best way to reorganize the United States Government policy development and implementation process from the cold war era bureaucracy, to one that implements a whole-of-government approach, is flexible and responsive in the allocation of resources, and clearly understands the global environment? There are several aspects to this question, but it begins with the President's National Security Strategy (NSS), that must provide a clear vision and comprehensive objectives. The NSS is the guiding document for developing foreign policy. While it is not designed to be a detailed plan on how to tackle strategic issues affecting the United States, it is direct guidance to each department or agency to develop plans, programs, and policies toward achieving the objectives stated in the NSS....only, the implementation of this "strategy" rarely materializes. The 2010 National Security Strategy is an aggressive and robust vision that is required to confront the plethora of challenges facing the United States today. The question now is: can it be implemented successfully?

This paper advocates four components for implementation of U.S foreign policy and describes each in successive paragraphs:

1. Whole-of-government approach to problem solving which is more than just diplomacy, development and defense.
2. Allocation of resources by function vice by department or agency to encourage policy implementation and solutions vice agency parochialism.
3. Cultural analysis "red team" to assist in the development of U.S. regional plans and policies that understand the cultural dynamics (opportunities) of a region, rather than a purely threat based analysis.

4. Holistic U.S. Government (USG) planning efforts by professional staffers to include U.S. regional campaign plans and regional interagency engagement groups.

The first step to achieving this objective is to frame the problem. The problem is implementing a foreign policy strategy that is hamstrung by overly restrictive governmental regulations on the allocation of funds, interagency parochialism, and too much centralized control within the beltway. United States Government (USG) departments and agencies promote employees by protecting resources and expanding programs, not for solving problems or advancing U.S. interests. Policy decisions are rightfully made within the confines of the National Security structure in Washington, but with less than sufficient input from the forward deployed experts in the field. To begin the process of national policy implementation, a comprehensive understanding of the global environment must be achieved.

The Baseline

In order to understand and discuss deterrence of asymmetrical threats and the current global environment, we must have a baseline or starting point. The League of Nations was founded after World War I to prevent war through collective security, disarmament, and settling international disputes through negotiation and arbitration, among other mandates.^{iv} The basic concept of Westphalian sovereignty, where Nation-states have territorial integrity without fear of external influences into domestic policies, is an agreeable framework with which to build and an amenable component of the United Nations mandate, the successor to the League of Nations. Under this premise, Nation-states have the

right to govern within their borders, but they also have the solemn responsibility to provide for the needs of their population through good governance (not necessarily democracy), economic viability, essential services, and rule of law. They also have the fundamental responsibility to govern their nation without harboring or exporting terrorists, terrorist organizations, or transnational criminal organizations.

Clausewitz stated that “War is a mere continuation of policy by other means.” His remarkable trinity, although a point of considerable debate among military theorists, is...

“...composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone. The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of government alone.”^v

If war is the interplay between the government, its military (or security forces), and the population, then conventional warfare can be defined as sovereign state conflict -- a test of wills between two nations that attempt to defeat the military (or fielded force) and subject the enemy nation to their political will; while irregular warfare, largely undefined in Clausewitz theory, is a competition for influence of a specific population -- attempting to gain legitimacy and influence by, with, and through a population -- with one side using unconventional methods and irregular forces, which largely negates the superior firepower and maneuverability of the conventional military. Failed and failing

states provide the environment for these irregular conflicts to spawn and the flames of these conflicts are fanned by state and quasi- or non-state actors alike.

Our task therefore is to develop an implementation plan based on the understanding that in order to shape the desired outcome in an area or region, USG plans, programs, and policies must interact with the government, the military (or security forces), and the population. Figure 1 below provides a diagram that explains the model. Each circle in the Venn diagram would change in size, scope, and overlap with the other circles based on our understanding of the logical (or illogical) relationships between the three entities within a designated nation state. The USG programs and policies put forth into each one of these spheres is based on selected input criteria such as type of government (ideology), military capabilities, foundation for rule of law, economic programs to support the indigenous population, etc., and the U.S. programs and policies change based on the desired outcome for that specific sphere.

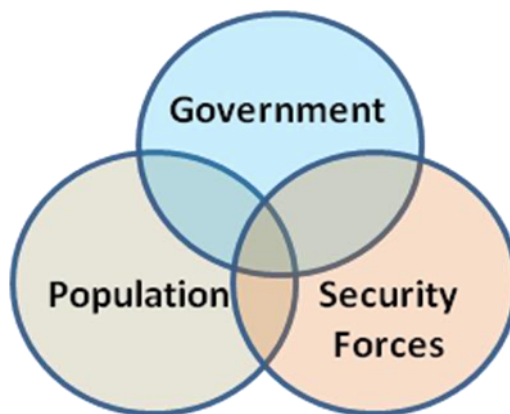


Figure 1: Venn diagram describing the interplay between the government, the security forces (or military) and the population.

The Global Environment

The global environment is extremely complex; an amalgamation of nuclear, non-nuclear, failed and failing states, combined with quasi-state and non-state actors that have incredible influence on diverse populations. The inextricable and growing trends of extremism, migration, and crime are all trends working against a world order based on good governance and rule of law. Globalization is creating global prosperity; but the accessibility of media and communication platforms has changed expectations, which has exacerbated the chasm between the “haves” and “have nots” that feeds both real and perceived injustices, in turn, these “injustices” provide the impetus for conflict. Rapid population growth creates opportunities for instability, radicalism, and extremism in less developed countries. Growing demand for energy, water, and food increases competition and, potentially, conflict. Climate change and natural disasters will compound already difficult conditions in developing countries, causing humanitarian crises, driving regionally destabilizing population migrations, and raising potential for endemic diseases. Terrorists are actively seeking WMD and will use them if acquired, which increases the potential for catastrophic attacks that will be globally destabilizing. Failed and/or failing States, which are unable or unwilling to maintain control over their territory, provide (or are unable to deny) safehavens for terrorist groups to prepare and export terrorism.

Samuel Huntington’s *Clash of Civilizations* construed that through globalization, people and tribal entities are losing their cultural identity and

subsequently feel the pull of returning to their traditional roles and rivalries. He delves into the “fundamentalist” religious movements that will fill the void of National pride as economic modernization and social change weaken National identity among the residents of Nation states. This will push the residents to seek inclusion and satisfaction elsewhere, thereby increasing their anxiety level and push them to an “us versus them” mentality. To compound this, Huntington discusses the 1300 years of conflict between the West and Islam. His assumption that the centuries old military conflict was unlikely to decline following the first Gulf War as thus far proved prescient. Increasing fundamentalists and Islamic movements over the last decade since his article was published has further increased his credibility. His assertion that “Islam has bloody borders” continues to be true.^{vi} Since Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, more and more Islamic people have united against the West, both militarily with terrorist activities around the world, and economically with increased oil prices and the Arab World boycott of Danish products after the printing of satirist Islamic cartoons in a Danish newspaper.^{vii}

Huntington’s assertion of a clash at two levels, the micro-level where “adjacent groups along fault lines between civilizations struggle, often violently, over the control of territory and each other;” and at the macro-level, where “states from different civilizations compete for relative military and economic power, struggle over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their particular political and religious values,” is what we are experiencing in the middle east and around the globe today.^{viii} Civilization

fault lines are simmering in Iraq as Sunnis, Shi'a and Kurds struggle for control of the their culture after several years of posturing, all with varying levels of support from neighbors and allies within the Muslim world. On the macro-level, Middle Eastern Nation States struggle for power on the world stage, wielding their oil as an international weapon while covertly and sometimes overtly supporting terrorist against the West. With the widespread influence of the internet and satellite television, the strategic information campaign to lure followers to one side at the expense of the other has demonstrated its main stream acceptance in Palestine with the election of a terrorist organization to lead their fledgling government into the future, perhaps at the great expense of international aid.

The threats facing the United States in the current environment -- from terrorism to the risks associated with globalization to disease and failing governments -- requires a strategy that promulgates an aggressive approach to combat threats by an engaging policy vice a reactionary mode of relying on defensive actions only. The argument put forth is that countries with democratic governments are peaceful countries that do not engage in war with their neighbors, therefore, to promote democracy across the globe is to promote world peace, even by force if necessary. But the United States security concerns do not end with terrorism or attacks on the United States, as U.S. interests also lie abroad with friends and allies. The spread of extremism, no matter what the religion, genocide or disease, are not in the best interests of the United States. With globalization shrinking the World, allowing small countries or non-state actors to effectively cause local and regional instability, each of these incidents

has the potential to spread and affect the world economy, the balance of power, or more importantly, the U.S. mainland. In order to shape or influence this global environment, the principles of Wilsonianism should steer U.S. foreign policy and provide a substantive framework to begin the conversation.

In order to advance U.S. interests in this difficult environment, holistic government solutions that integrate all facets of the government, industry where applicable, and USG friends and allies are necessary. As stated in the National Security Strategy 2010, “To succeed, we must update, balance, and integrate all of the tools of American power and work with our allies and partners to do the same.”^{ix} This calls for an interagency planning construct that understands the U.S. interests, incorporates input from across the government and industry, and resources those recommendations based on solutions, not on department or agency parochialism.

National Policy Implementation

The overall goal of America’s National Security Strategy is to prevent attacks against U.S. and U.S. interests, i.e. protect the American people. If the national security policy development process understands the current operational environment, agrees to a baseline of U.S. support to the international community, and accepts the allocation of resources based upon function vice cold-war era stovepipe funding, then the competition for influence over a relevant population will take the lead in foreign policy development and the angst over U.S. militarization of U.S. policy will diminish in time. The Chinese art of war emphasizes that it is far easier to vanquish an adversary before an antagonistic

situation has developed. In fact, the acme of military art is to get the enemy to “give in” in advance, and do so discretely, by intervening upstream before the conflict unfolds without ever having to engage in battle. Using a river analogy, is it easier to change the course of a river at its mouth, where the river is the deepest, the current is the fastest, and the river is the widest, or is it easier to change the course of the river at the source, where the water is the shallowest, the current is but a trickle, and the banks are not so far apart? The obvious answer is the latter, yet substantially more resources are allocated for actions at the river’s mouth. See figure 2.

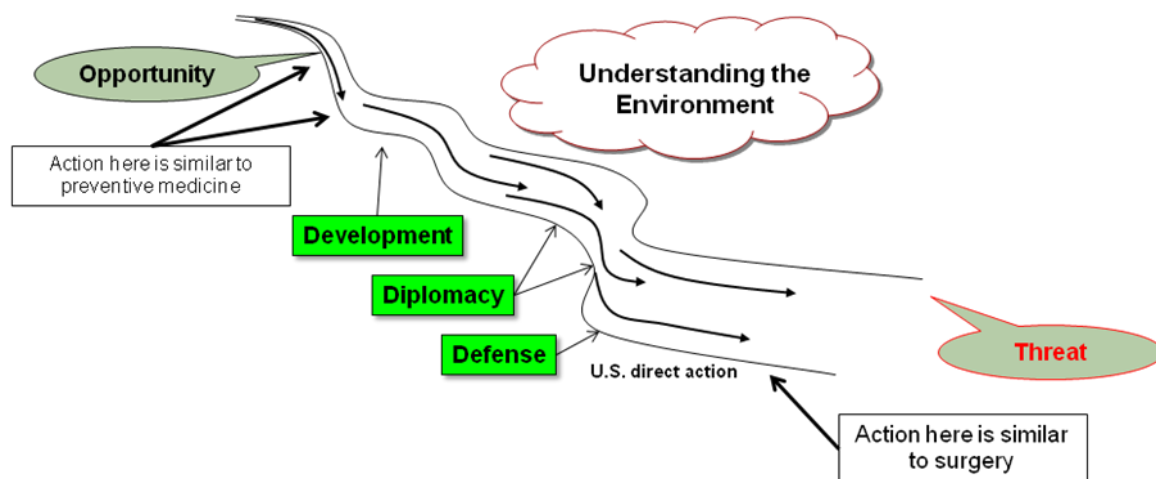


Figure 2. Foreign policy programs in river analogy

Deterrence has been a cornerstone of U.S. policy for decades. It has been predominately linked to nuclear deterrence during the cold war in an effort to prevent nuclear war and mutually assured destruction. Deterrence is actually a component of the larger strategy of prevention. Prevention entails engagement across the political, social, economic, military and informational spectrum with policies, strategies and actions to encourage and/or discourage certain courses

of action, by friends, allies, adversaries and enemies alike. Positive actions to empower, enable, and enhance encourage nation-state self-determination and good governance in our overall desire to achieve sustainable, self-regulating solutions. Negative actions short of war to deter, preclude, and preempt are designed to discourage divisive, disruptive, and deliberate policies or actions that strive to promote discontent and rebellion that destabilizes the world order.

The USG interagency community's actions and policies must encourage positive actions while focusing other efforts to deter hostile actions. If deterrence fails and military action is necessary, it is important to understand that the use of force is temporary in nature, as compared to the natural tendency of the situation. It is through a process of transformation, not necessarily the use of force (although it can be an impetus), that one achieves an effect.

The population centric approach, a component of current counterinsurgency doctrine in use in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in formal U.S. military doctrine since the publication of FM 3-24, the Counterinsurgency Field Manual, incorporates an understanding of socio-cultural conditions of a specific region. This populace-centric approach recognizes that, in the future, competitively securing influence in the global marketplace will be critical to influencing the choices of individuals as well as influencing the strategic environment. More importantly, such an environment demands that all elements of national power be integrated to garner the influence needed to achieve U.S. objectives.

To understand the population, the aggregate of the relevant population in a region/area on a normal distribution yield provides a probability distribution, that, if put into four categories, provides a basis for targeted programs based upon which category the population lies within.

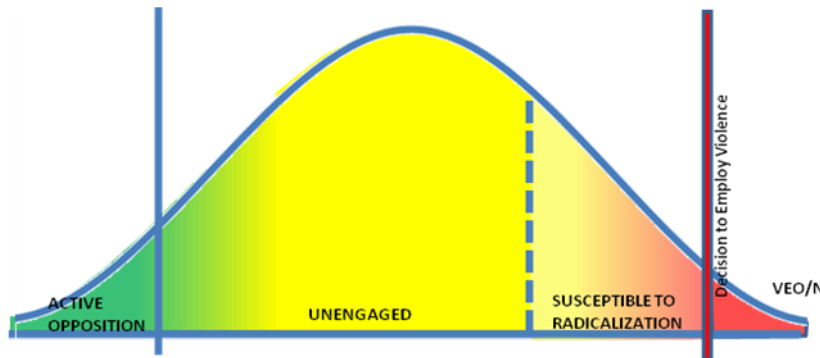


Figure 3. Normal distribution of an aggregate population

On the far right in the red section of the figure 3 graph are the true believers, the violent extremist organizations or networks, who have already made the decision to employ violence to further their goals and objectives and deterrence has failed. Direct military or police action is the only course of action against this group. The active opposition depicted on the left in green, are the moderate voices that actively oppose the use of violence. These are the people and organizations that need U.S. assistance in organizing and spreading their message of peace and hope. While the majority of the population is unengaged (depicted by the largest portion of the normal distribution curve in yellow), there is a portion of the population that are susceptible to radicalization and either actively or tacitly support the violent extremists. The competition for influence is for the unengaged, and they must be pulled back to the active opposition side of the graph by indigenous voices, not necessarily U.S. overt actions. The use of

the normal distribution graph is for conceptual purposes only as the graph will vary depending on the input variables, i.e. tribe, region, ideology, etc., which then requires a different mix of USG programs and activities, based on the desired effects of each group.

As Eric Hoffer tells us in the *True Believer*, the best way to counter a mass movement is with another mass movement.^x Based on this understanding, to counter a network with a network, an appropriate method to counter radical Islamic extremists in a region is with moderate Muslim voices from the same region. By identifying the active opposition and strengthening their organizational abilities through networking, social media, and other techniques, a viable indigenous alternate and competing network evolves that encourages a positive vision for the future that encourages the rule of law.

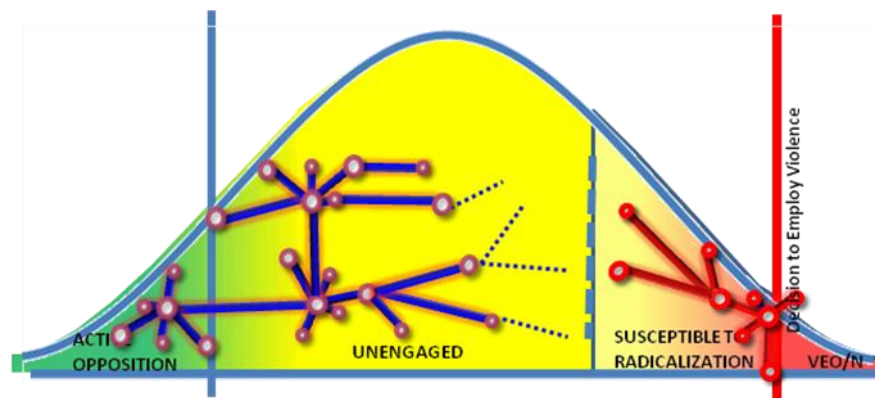


Figure 4. Competing network approach in population-centric strategy

Figure 4 depicts the competing network approach in the population-centric strategy. Once the socio-cultural team conducts the critical analysis of a relevant population; programs, policies, actions and activities are put into place as part of a holistic USG plan that includes diplomacy and the indigenous security forces. The U.S. strategy is one that will bolster the active opposition -- identify and

organize activists, educate and enable the moderate forces, and assist them to build capacity. Simultaneously, programs are put in place to activate the neutral population, diminish radicalization among those that are susceptible, and isolate and defeat those that are actively supporting or pursuing violent extremist activities. The “alternate network” provides a competing message to the extremist network that operates within the designated area and reaches out into the unengaged to pull them to the side of the active opposition and the right of self-determination. The critical portion of this strategy is that it is a comprehensive whole-of-government approach that requires an allocation of resources for diplomacy, defense, and development.

Militarization of Foreign Policy

“In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

-- President Eisenhower^{xi}

"America's civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long -- relative to what we traditionally spend on the military, and more importantly, relative to the responsibilities and challenges our nation has around the world."^{xii}

Secretary Gates

There are an increasing number of critics within the United States lamenting what they perceive as the militarization of U.S. foreign policy. This is not a new revelation. Several of our founding fathers were suspicious of a large standing army and therefore wrote the U.S. Constitution declaring the President as the Commander-in-Chief while granting Congress the authority to declare war, part of the U.S. checks and balances. President George Washington warned

against the “overgrown military establishments, which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty”^{xiii} in his farewell address and French statesman Georges Clemenceau said that “war is too serious a matter to leave to soldiers.”^{xiv}

Ronald E. Neumann, who served as ambassador to Afghanistan, Algeria and Bahrain, denounced the progressive militarization of U.S. foreign policy over the past twenty years and underlined the perils it has wrought. His evidence was not increased influence in the National Security decision-making apparatus of the United States, or the increase in military commands in global hotspots, but the simple ratio of funds between the Department of Defense and the State Department within the most recent budget. Defense was allocated \$750 billion while State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) commanded \$50 billion. Using these numbers out of context allows for irrelevant comparisons, like indicating the U.S. spends about \$2.3 million on each State Department employee and only \$250 thousand for each DOD employee. The size of the budget is not what really riles the critics, it’s the fact that in 2002, 94% of development-related activities were executed by State and USAID personnel, but by 2008 the military was doing 52% of the development work.^{xv} This simplistic view exemplifies the parochialism within the various department and agencies of the U.S. Government that worry more about department funds and programs than achieving critical desired objectives, regardless of who takes the credit.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates warned against the risk of a "creeping militarization" of U.S. foreign policy, saying the State Department should lead U.S. engagement with other countries, with the military playing a supporting role.^{xvi} The understanding that the State Department lead on foreign policy development is widely accepted, but there is a perception globally on where the real power base is in U.S. diplomacy that may differ. When General Musharaff led a coup and pronounced himself President of Pakistan, the first person he called was not the U.S. Ambassador or the State Department, he called U.S. General Zinni, the commander of U.S. Central Command. As the Clinton administration maintained Pakistan at arm's length, Zinni advocated that the Pakistani military can play a "stabilizing role in the region."^{xvii} The U.S. eventually normalized relations with Pakistan, especially after the attacks of 9-11 and Pakistan became a critical ally for the War on Terror.

The argument can be made that the U.S. "divides" the globe up into six geographic regions and assigns a military general to "command" each (U.S. Central Command, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Southern Command, and the U.S. Northern Command), giving visions of past European colonization and current U.S. hegemony. The State Department uses 194 or so ambassadors to cover that same geographic area, with fewer assets and less ability to project power. Although the ambassador is the President's direct representative to a Nation and has the authority to allow or deny U.S. military assets in the country, the perception that U.S. policy has a distinct military hue to it is real and pervasive. In order to

appear to have the diplomatic house in order, Presidents have continued to appoint special envoys in increasing magnitudes to tackle what are essentially regional issues, a view DOD already acknowledges. If this is the new normal, why not formalize these special envoy positions within the hierarchy and resource them appropriately?

The question is not how, but why hasn't this been done already? Each department and agency within the U.S. Government identifies with different parts of the world by their own set of standards and guidelines. For example, DOD breaks Pakistan and India into USCENTCOM and USPACOM respectively, while State has both in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has them in separate offices also, which, interestingly, are not directly aligned with the unified commands). If militarization of foreign policy is a concern, then developing regional interagency engagement groups (RIEG) with a U.S. Regional Ambassador as the director with a military general as one deputy and a senior officer from USAID as a second deputy seems like a viable solution. The RIEG would have several functions:

- Synchronize all USG policies, programs, and actions within the designated region in accordance with the U.S. National Security Strategy (funds allocated by region)
- Identify gaps, seams, redundancies, and divergence in regional strategies, programs, and activities, then address in a regional campaign plan
- Coordinate USG programs and policies with friends and allies in the region to move towards common goals (identify access among allies)
- Develop a long term campaign plan implementing USG national policies
 - Maintain consistent diplomatic engagement from a regional perspective to forward USG goals and objectives

- Build partner capacity in security functions, law enforcement, economic growth, essential services, and rule of law
- Understand the cultural dynamics that drive the region; formulate plans and policies based on this understanding
 - ✓ Identify key threats and the root causes of violent extremism (Isolate, defeat, prevent the re-emergence)
 - ✓ Identify active opposition groups to violent extremism and develop plans and programs to bolster their activity (social media, community centers, etc)
- Encourage human rights and rule of law solutions while attempting to resolve long held grievances

This solution merges policy decisions and regional action to provide unity of effort and more efficient use of resources. The establishment of an official regional interagency task force provides a professional interagency planning staff that works together every day; eliminates parochialism in the budget battles as resources are allocated by function; eliminates the ad-hoc and sometimes controversial special envoy; and strengthens the State Department as the lead on foreign policy development and implementation. The DOD unified command structure folds into these regional embassies, thereby ensuring that DOD regional actions are closely coordinated with State and U.S. National policies.

Conclusion

"The president has made it a priority to reform government and make it more effective and efficient for the American people, which is why his budget reflects a commitment to streamlining government and saving taxpayer dollars," ^{xviii}

-- White House spokeswoman Amy Brundage

In order to meet the daunting global challenges outlined above, the federal government must transition to a more adaptable, efficient, and flexible foreign policy planning process that receives the maximum result from the allocation of

fewer resources. Incorporating professional bureaucratic planners across the federal government that are not trapped in the machinations of daily agency tasks, are rewarded for their whole of government solutions (not those confined to their specific department or agency), and understand the significance of holistic government solutions, are extremely important in presenting comprehensive solutions to identified problem sets. The 9-11 commission recommended “unifying the many participants in the counterterrorism effort and their knowledge in a network-based information-sharing system that transcends traditional government boundaries,”^{xix} but that has not happened yet.

The size and scope of the U.S. Government is complex and overwhelming, and each successive President must balance the need for effectiveness from his staff, based on his vision for the U.S. National Security posture, with that of the strong personalities each bring to the table. Former President Bush attempted to cajole better interagency cooperation with National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44 when he expressed the need for improved civil-military operations, but little happened:

“Promote security of the US through improved coordination, planning and implementation for reconstruction and stabilization assistance for foreign states and regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife.”^{xx}

Since 9-11, the United States Government has created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Office of the Director for National Intelligence (ODNI), and the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization at the State Department (S/CRS), just to name a few. Each of these new departments and agencies

brings a new government bureaucracy to the table without necessarily mitigating the issues or problems that they were designed to solve, and without increasing efficiency in the interagency planning process. The GAO report on duplication in government programs demonstrates the overlap and redundancies built into the federal system that rewards effort by department and/or agency and not by effectiveness or efficiency on USG priorities.^{xxi} Until department and agency cultures are changed, resources are allocated based on holistic USG policy implementation plans, and promotions and advancements are predicated on advancing USG policies vice department or agency policies, the interagency process will continue to function less efficiently than it should. In this period of constrained resources and a volatile world order, it is imperative that the USG function as efficiently and effective as possible.

The United States desire to promote a just and sustainable world order, where countries develop sustainable, self-regulating solutions, requires serious modifications to the current cold-war structure of the federal government. The current global environment requires comprehensive and persistent engagement from all departments and agencies with the USG, and they must have a common purpose. Implementing an RIEG process would assist in building partner capacity through effective interagency development teams; employ socio-cultural assessment teams to provide the population-centric basis for regional policy formulation and implementation; and provide unity of effort across the government through shared resources and common goals.

Practical application

In order to test the theory described in this paper, the recent uprisings in North Africa provide a readymade litmus test to test the viability of this recommended organization.

Regional interagency engagement group North Africa (RIEGNA) -- a standing interagency task force designed to provide a regional perspective, provides significant policy recommendations to Washington and is a policy implementation headquarters. RIEGNA is built to provide necessary local and regional expertise across all the facets of government.



Figure 5. Regional Interagency Engagement Group North Africa

The purpose of the RIEGNA is to synchronize all USG policies, programs, and actions within North Africa, which is one of al-Qaeda's five fronts (al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb or AQIM). The RIEGNA has a military component, focusing on mil-to-mil engagement in all countries in the area of operations (AO); a diplomatic component that engages all the U.S. Ambassadors and leaders from the various countries; and a development component that identifies critical

long-term assistance and support requirements that assist in facilitating democracy, job creation, rule of law, education, etc. A socio-cultural analysis team, separate from but closely coordinated with the intelligence community, assesses the tribal, cultural, ideological, and religious fault lines in the region and determines, along with the cyber team, where U.S. interests lie.

Once unrest begins in late 2010 in Tunisia, the RIEGNA energizes their operations center and provides an assessment of the “Arab Spring.” Through continuous dialogue and information gathering in the region, the RIEGNA provides critical analysis on the effects of the Tunisia unrest to the rest of the region.

- The diplomatic front encourages democratic values, human rights, rule of law and restraint by government forces against demonstrators. This message is spread across the region, not just in Tunisia. Coordinates with friends and allies in the region. Prepares substantive resolution for the United Nations, as required.
- The socio-cultural team reaches out on social media to the known activists that are mobilizing for democratic reform. Part of the assessment is to understand if democratic reform is the purpose or if Muslim extremists are the organizers.
- The military component maintains mil-to-mil contacts with counterparts in the region to stress restraint, the law of war, and human rights in relation to protestors. Identifies threats and provide military options to protect/support democratic reform if necessary.
- The development team provides programs and resources to assist the active opposition, once identified and vetted as having a history of promoting democratic reform, to provide an alternate network to that of extremists.
- The RIEGNA strives to build partner capacity in security functions, law enforcement, economic growth, essential services, and rule of law.

As the calls for reform and protests spread across North Africa, the RIEGNA is already forward deployed across the region, has an understanding of the key activists (and threats) in each country based on social media and human intelligence, provides key military and development options, and has networked all the regional embassies, along with State and the White House, into the operations center for focused discussions. This U.S. regional response allows State to synchronize all elements of the national power in one headquarters, outside of the beltway and all the administrative distractions that accompany offices in D.C. A regional office would have foretold the events in Egypt, Libya and elsewhere if there was a concerted effort to understand the cultural aspect of a region vice just assessing the threat. The added benefit is an interagency headquarters that has trained and conducted exercises together on conflict, humanitarian relief efforts, and limited engagement scenarios so when issues arise, there is a trained and professional interagency group prepared to respond. The global marketplace moves quickly and does not stop at arbitrary borders on a map; therefore the U.S. response must be rapid, flexible, and regional in nature.

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Endnotes:

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